

*IT IS THE MISSION OF THE SCHODACK CENTRAL SCHOOLS
to develop our students to become "...active, reflective, creative learners. In our schools, they will engage in rewarding work and practice behaviors that are intelligent in both an academic and a practical sense. Students will develop the attitudes, skills and understandings that will allow them to fulfill their potential and to function successfully in their individual and social roles."*

SCHODACK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
1216 Maple Hill Road, Castleton, New York 12033-1699

March 15, 2012

Maple Hill High School Library

Present: J. Andrew Fleck, Michael Hiser, Bruce Romanchak (left at 11:10 pm), George Warner (left at 7:15 pm and returned at 8:13 pm), Christine DiGiulio, Lisa Lafferty, Michael Charsky, Mary Yurista and Paul Puccio.

Also present: Robert Horan, Monica Kim, Donna Watson, Jason Chevrier, Michael Bennett, Ron Agostinoni and Michele Reickert.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES – REGULAR

1. Meeting called to order by Board President, J. Andrew Fleck at 6:02 p.m.
2. Executive Session 6:00 pm through 6:45 pm to discuss contract negotiations and personnel matters (public meeting to begin at 6:45 pm).
3. Mary Yurista moved for approval of present agenda. Christine DiGiulio seconded. All present in favor.
4. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
5. Michael Hiser moved for approval of minutes of regular meeting January 26, 2012, workshop meeting February 2, 2012, and regular meeting February 16, 2012. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.
6. Reports/Presentations:
 - a. **Microbial Fuel Cells** – Kenneth Malloy’s Principals of Engineering Class
George Warner introduced Richard Frederick, Director of RPI Emerging Ventures Ecosystems and Brent Solina from RPI who he met at a Smart Start Conference in May and spoke about a coalition that was formed between the Village of Castleton, the Town of Schodack, Rensselaer County IDA, The Center for Economic Growth and RPI Emerging Ventures Ecosystems to take the idea of turning wastewater into electricity and teach it to our students. The Mayor has Castleton has offered the use of its Sewer Treatment facility in Castleton so they can use this technology and possibly turn it into a company someday. Brent Solina explained that the idea of making electricity from wastewater started in the basement of his apartment. Mr. Malloy introduced his students who have been experimenting to create their own: Bradley Engwer - Grade 12, Nicholas Kern - Grade 11,

Every child will be challenged, and every child will challenge every assessment.

William Noll - Grade 11, Emily Santore - Grade 12, Jack (John) Scott - Grade 10. Students explained how they created a battery (microbial fuel cell) that creates electricity from raw sewage. As the bacteria (bugs or anaerobic bacteria they don't breathe oxygen) eat away at the raw sewage it creates electricity. Students keep journals making it easy to look back at what has been tried to see what works and what does not. The students created their own battery through numerous experiments using different glues and epoxies onto; they found a way to make the prototype keeping it sealed; they also made their own raw sewage using sugars and starches like bananas, rice, honey and other common items. Students explained that they collaborated with the math and science departments gathering information to build their prototype. Mr. Malloy mentioned that Brent Solina has come to the class numerous times and been able to explain what happened on that microbial level. Brent Solina commented that the students used principals of biology, bio-chemistry, electro-chemistry, mechanical engineering, environmental engineering and electrical engineering in creating this prototype. He praised the students for what they did in a five (5) month period.

b. **Dignity Act – July 1, 2012** – Robert Horan, Jason Chevrier, Michael Bennett and Ron Agostinoni

Mr. Horan began by explaining that the NYS Dignity for all Students Act which has to be in place July 1, 2012. School districts have to review their existing Code of Conduct, their existing policy on harassment and write another policy on the Dignity Act for all Students. Schodack already does a lot of this “environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function”. In a survey done a few years back by the SCCP, students were asked if they felt safe coming to school, about 90% of our students answered yes. Ron Agostinoni spoke about what the high school currently does related bullying, harassment and intimidation: R-5 Productions spokesperson spent some time at the school, kids like him, he is funny; Schodack Police Department is partners with the district not to punish but to educate students about what can happen; Sources of Strength focuses on who is your source of strength, Camfel Productions and 518 Group is similar to R-5 Productions, these are staggered; SADD Presentations; CST (Child Study Team) meetings every Wednesday, School Social Worker, Psychologist, Nurse, Guidance and Ron meet and discuss grade changes, etc. looking for an indicators of kids having a difficult time. Positive events at the high school include – All Night Party (party all night above the influence) Variety Show, Hill Stock, Spirit Week, Rock Congo, St. Baldrick's, etc. Open line of communication is very important. Michael Bennett spoke about what the Middle School does as a response to bullying. PBIS – “A World of Change” students faculty and staff want to change the atmosphere of the school, SCCP Presentations, there are street signs posted in the hallways about being kind, safe, responsible and respectful. We are teaching these things at the middle level, where kids are going through growth and a lot of peer influence. We have always talked about the bully and the victim but we changed the focus to being an ally, being responsible to let people know what is going on. Presentations have been given on cyber bullying. The “Zip it” campaign had 400 students sign on and made a pledge that if you have nothing nice to say, say nothing. A bullying box is available for kids fill out slips to report what is going on. Students participate in Spirit Week; Mix it up day (students sit with students they usually don't interact with “mix it up”). Schodack Police gets involved in talking with students. Jason Chevrier spoke about what the

elementary school is doing. Teachers build good positive classroom community, how we treat each other. Morning program theme “Cool Enough to Care” topics include: bullying, volunteering, doing your best, giving, and the Golden Rule. The elementary school also has “mix it up day”, participates in the “Zip it” campaign, disability awareness puppet shows (puppets have different disabilities, cane, crutch, wheel chair, etc.). Educating students on different disabilities, not everyone is the same. Bus safety is promoted. PTO/School events involving positive interactions: community fair, fun nights, Halloween party, read-in, read over-sleepover, international fair, school spirit week, etc. Mr. Horan stated that he feels the district does a good job educating and promoting drug and alcohol free schools as well as anti-bullying. A video clip was shown which was made by students against bullying. Mr. Horan commented that it was powerful, and that he was proud of the students and teachers that put it together. Mr. Puccio expressed his appreciation to the people who make these kinds of things happen even though they are unfunded mandates from the State.

- c. **2012 – 2013 Draft 2 Budget Presentation** – Mr. Horan talked about presentations he has done for the students educating them about what goes into a budget. Students from grade 6 through 12 better understand what a tax rate and tax levy are. Students and community members come to the Board and express their concerns and the Board understands but they need to also take it to the next level. Many students have started letter campaigning we can’t and don’t tell students what to do but do encourage positive advocating. Mr. Frese’s class was in Albany advocating for schools recently. Mr. Horan also expressed that the list supporting the proposed cuts has dollar amounts allocated to each cut. He stressed that he is not happy about having to make any suggestions / decisions when it comes to cuts but it has to be done, but three years of a reduced state / federal aid has made it difficult to maintain what we have. We continue to apply for grants and look for other ways to gain funds to maintain what we have. Monica Kim explained that the presentation is not much different from the last draft. One question we keep getting is “Why is my levy only going up 2% but my taxes 5%?” When a tax assessment is lowered after a dispute is won by a tax payer, the other tax payers absorb the assessment reduction of that tax payer in effect causing taxes to increase. The District has submitted its tax cap calculation to the Comptroller’s office. She explained that if the district were to make no change to the what is offered and made no cuts or used reserved and had to ask the tax payers to make up the 1.5 million dollar shortage, it would mean a 16% increase in the tax levy. The board has asked that we not exceed the tax cap limit. Therefore, \$1.5 million needs to be cut or be made up from fund balance. The problem with using all the fund balance is that once it is used it is gone and there are too many unknowns to go to that extreme. We expect to have \$2.1 million in fund balance at the end of the upcoming year. If we use \$750,000 now, at the end of 2012-13 we will have fund balance to sustain us for approximately 3 years. Mr. Horan explained a correction to a slide that had a typo on the last presentation pertaining to Art and Music, it appeared that the district would only be keeping a certified teacher in Art and not in Music; it was a typo/oversight. The District intends to keep one certified Art and one certified Music teacher at that level. As far as the timeline, we will have the last Community Budget Advisory meeting on March 28th, the Board will adopt a budget on April 19th, May 3rd will be our public budget hearing and meet the candidates night and May 15th being the budget vote and board election. The terms for open seats are three year terms, and

petitions with 25 signatures are due to the District Clerk by Monday, April 16th. Monica Kim, Matt LaClair, Donna Watson, Ron Agostinoni, Michael Bennett and Jason Chevrier explained the proposed cuts; each cut was explained as well as impact and rationale given. Proposed cuts were broken by building / department and administrators explained the impact / rationale for each. Paul Puccio asked if the district looked at what programs BOCES could provide of which we would get State Aid. The district has looked and will continue to look at BOCES options. Bruce Romanchak asked how many students are impacted by eliminating student competition. Mr. Horan explained that some competitions do not cost and others do. Donna Watson expressed that the district has been diligent in looking for and applying for grants to help offset some of the costs. Mr. Horan talked about an anonymous donation last year that was specific to be used towards one club. That is always an option if someone is looking to help. Jason Chevrier commented that the Elementary school over the past few years has done a tremendous amount of restructuring, we have lost sections and class sizes have increases. There are reductions to elementary music and art; these are not mandated programs, however, we do recognize and value the work and value the benefit to the students. There are fine art standards that need to be met but it does not have to be taught by a certified teacher. It could be incorporated into the classroom teaching. Paul Puccio asked if the reduction in supplies would the responsibility shift to the parents. The supplies cut would be things like birthday trees, literacy activity books, bulletin board supplies, etc., not something the parents would be asked to supply. Michael Bennett expressed that the middle school has seen similar reductions and class size changes that the elementary school has. Students are required to have ½ a credit in Music, we have provided that as well as other options but unfortunately, we have to look at non-mandated areas to cut. A reduction to Social Workers will have an impact, they are valuable. Clerical reductions are difficult as well. Donna Watson and Michael Bennett spent a great deal of time working on a grant that we are hopeful to get and save some of these cuts district wide. Robert Horan and Andrew Fleck thanked them for the tremendous amount of time and effort put into this application. Mr. Horan stated that Schodack was the only school in the Questar Boces region to apply for the grant. Ron Agostinoni explained the proposed high school cuts. Reductions are based on projections in enrollment. It is difficult to schedule when classes are broken into single / double sections. Paul Puccio asked Ron if he had collaborated with other schools facing the same reduction decisions. Ron answered that he has talked to Ichabod and Voorheesville to see if there were classes that could be shared. The district is utilizing online learning to meet the needs of students in need of tutoring for discipline or medical needs in able to reduce tutoring costs. Mr. Horan talked about multi-building reductions; they affect the district in a whole. There are no decisions made as to how these reductions will be shared district wide. Combining clubs, athletics will be looked at with other districts to see what everyone else is cutting ie: JV or Varsity of one sport. It is hard to cut clubs and athletics; they keep kids involved and out of trouble. Reduction in Teacher Assistant support is difficult. They are valuable and do a tremendous job. The work with the teachers and students in the classroom, allowing help to struggling students. Additional non-mandated items NOT currently being considered are: Adjust bus pickups, additional reduction to clerical support, reduce all athletics, eliminate elementary music and art, eliminate MS/HS Band & Chorus, Eliminate upper-level Language, Mathematics and Science Courses, Eliminate MS/HS Small

Every child will be challenged, and every child will challenge every assessment.

Learning Communities, reduce HS electives to mandated levels, eliminate additional library media specialist, eliminate school psychologist, reduce Kindergarten to half day or eliminate all together, close MS and reduce Advanced Placement and Honors offerings, reduce programs for At-Risk, eliminate all afterschool runs, reduce an additional 12 Teacher Assistants and tuition out all HS students. George Warner talked about Kahn Academy, an online learning website that he saw on 60 Minutes. Administrators are looking into different online academies to see if we can utilize. NYS makes it difficult to be taught by a teacher in another state and keep NYS credit.

7. Board Discussion.

Michael Hiser talked about a letter he wrote to the Times Union hoping to have an editorial done about a school that is one step ahead of the game. He is waiting for a response. Paul Puccio talked about the formula being used and that it does not allow for potential growth. He has worked with attorneys to prepare a letter to send to the state. Andrew Fleck read a letter from NYS Special Education Department stating that the school district is 100% in compliance with all requirements. He thanked the PPS department. He also shared a thank you letter / picture from Sierra Pizzola of the completed softball field. Lisa Lafferty asked if there was any intention to replace the library media specialist at the middle school since the current library media specialist resigned. Mr. Bennett explained that we are covering the needs with internal people but at this time we are not looking at replacing that person.

8. Meeting open for public discussion.

Mr. Fleck opened public discussion by asking that everyone state their name and that all comments be directed to their child or their experience and that no one speak for a child other than their own, other community members or an employee of the district. Mary Mosher spoke about Athletics and how much her children thrived from their experiences and the guidance from the coaches and athletic director. They are dedicated to the program and the students. They involve them in things other than just sports like working with the handicapped and teach them life lessons. Dawn Gerrain asked if the decision on what was being used from fund balance was firm, we do not know what will happen next year and should we use \$750,000 this year. Once we take something away, we will not get it back. Can we use more fund balance and keep some of the thing we are looking at cutting? Brenda Nixon spoke in support of the Teacher Assistants. She expressed that it is not just a job. They care for the students; their hearts are in it and are needed. Linda Siatkowski express her thanks to the district for the education he son received and expressed that he son was helped by his involvement in music. Alissa O'Connor and alumni talked about the coaches and athletics and the values she was taught and learning about giving back to the community through their influence. Pam Timmons spoke about the change in treasurer's hours, would we still be getting good audits, how would it effect the segregation of duties? How would reducing Needham's time affect our rate of insurance? She suggested putting supply lists or wish lists on the website so people could donate from the list. The public wants to help, but doesn't know how. Mary Mosher expressed concern about Music, the felt there were approximately 100 students involved in music and that there has to be something that can be

Every child will be challenged, and every child will challenge every assessment.

looked at that doesn't affect 100 students. School may be the only time a student has the opportunity to choose an instrument and learn it. Seth Hendrick asked about bullying and if it was reported to the State. Mr. Horan answered that it was reported on the districts VADIR (Violent and Disruptive Incidents Report). Mr. Hendrick also expressed his appreciation to the Board and the decisions they have to make. Laura Cook spoke about the variety of programs that will be affected by cuts. She also spoke of the appreciation to the Teaching Assistants for what they offer to the teachers and students.

9. Policies:

- a. Video Cameras in Schools – Bruce Romanchak moved for 3rd reading and adoption. Lisa Lafferty seconded. All present in favor.

10. Consent agenda:

- a. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the Treasurer's Reports for the month of February 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
- b. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the Revenue and Budget Status Reports for the month of February 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
- c. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the Extra-Classroom Activity Report for the month of February 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
- d. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of the Claims Auditor Report for the month of February 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
- e. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of recommendations of the district Committee on Special Education regarding 2011-2012 students: #000113834. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
- f. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of recommendations of the district Committee on Preschool Special Education regarding 2011-2012 special education services for students: 000114054 and 000114071. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
- g. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a Contract with Mary Alice McCraith, MS Sp. Reg. Ed., TVI, teacher of the visually impaired at a rate of \$120.00 per 60 minute sessions for up to 2 hours and 40 minutes per week, effective February 17, 2012 through June 24, 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
- h. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of change in assessment for LeRoy Den Besten for real property located at 2 Den Besten Way (219.-1-8.3) from \$550,000 to \$420,000 pursuant to Stipulation of Settlement and Order Index No.: 237251, resulting in a change in taxes \$10,670.00 to \$8,148.00 for 2011-12 and a refund of \$2,522.00. Michael Hiser

Every child will be challenged, and every child will challenge every assessment.

- seconded. All present in favor.
- i. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a consulting agreement with H.M.B Consultants to deliver a comprehensive food service bid for the 12-13 school year, conduct pre-bid conference, oversee the opening of the bids, evaluate the proposals and bid amounts in detail and make a recommendation at a rate not to exceed \$4,600.00. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - j. Bruce Romanchak moved for acceptance of lease agreement with Questar III in the amount of \$4,600 for rental of one (1) classroom at Maple Hill Middle School for the period of March 12, 2012 through June 30, 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - k. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a health services contract with Rensselaer City School District for the 2011-12 school years in the amount of \$385.15 for one (1) resident student attending nonpublic schools. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - l. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a health services contract with North Colonie Central School District for the 2011-12 school year in the amount of \$4,961.80 (496.18 each) for ten (10) resident students attending nonpublic schools. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - m. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a resolution to increase the 2011-12 General Fund budget account #A5510456400000 by a check from Utica National Insurance in the amount of \$5,417.50 for repairs to bus #102. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - n. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a resolution to increase the 2011-12 General Fund budget account #A1621404502000 by a check from Utica National Insurance in the amount of \$12,788.00 for repairs to the Maple Hill Middle School gymnasium floor. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - o. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a resolution to increase the 2011-12 General Fund budget account #A2110460001200 by a check from Castleton Kiwanis Club in the amount of \$200.00 to help offset costs of a field trip to Guggenheim Museum in NYS for the advanced Art students. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - p. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a resolution to increase the 2011-12 General Fund budget account #A2110460001200 by a check from Target Field Trip Grants/Scholarship America in the amount of \$700.00 to help offset costs of a field trip to Guggenheim Museum in NYS for the advanced Art students. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - q. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a resolution to increase the 2011-12 General Fund budget account #A28551500000LX by a check from MHYL Foundation, Inc. in the amount of \$4,200.00 to offset costs of the Maple Hill Lacrosse team. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.

- r. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of a resolution authorizing the district to participate in the Rensselaer City School District Local Government Efficiency Grant Application (the "Rensselaer LGEG") for purposes of studying opportunities to reduce school district spending by expanding and sharing school Internal Control Audit Services. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - s. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of an amendment to the Cooperative Agreement with NYCLASS Investment Municipal Cooperation authorizing a change in Lead Participant to the Village of Potsdam from the Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES effective April 23, 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - t. Bruce Romanchak moved for approval of an overnight trip for the 2012 senior class to Ocean City, Maryland from June 8-10, 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
11. Resignations/Appointments
- a. Paul Puccio moved for acceptance of the resignation of Erin Dougherty, Library Media Specialist, effective February 24, 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - b. Paul Puccio moved for approval of the probationary appointment of Kandee Goodall, Senior School Monitor, for 2.00 hours/day at a rate of \$14.65/hour, effective February 27, 2012 through October 27, 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - c. Paul Puccio moved for approval of the probationary appointment of Peter Varian, Custodial Worker, for 8 hours/day at a rate of \$15.57/hour, effective March 16, 2012 through September 16, 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - d. Paul Puccio moved for approval of permanent appointment of Rich Vogel, Custodial Worker, effective July 1, 2011. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - e. Paul Puccio moved for approval of permanent appointment of Lori Kolb, School Monitor, effective September 6, 2011. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - f. Paul Puccio moved for approval of permanent appointment of Angela Beber, School Monitor, effective September 6, 2011. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - g. Paul Puccio moved for approval of permanent appointment of Heather Brewer, Registered Professional Nurse (School), effective September 6, 2011. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - h. Paul Puccio moved for approval of the probationary appointment of Lori Kolb, School Bus Attendant, for 2 hours/day at a rate of \$13.87, effective March 16, 2012 through November 16, 2012. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.

- i. Paul Puccio moved for approval of coach/Advisor(es):
 - i. Timothy Ryan – Maple Hill High School Math League. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - j. Paul Puccio moved for approval of volunteer assistant coach(es):
 - i. Lee Wetherby – Boys Track & Field Coach. Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - k. Paul Puccio moved for approval of non-instructional substitute(s): Anthony Moak, Sharon L. Moreau, Jeffrey Gibney (pending fingerprint clearance). Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
 - l. Paul Puccio moved for approval of substitute teacher(s): Jeff Simonds, Jeffrey Gibney (pending fingerprint clearance). Michael Hiser seconded. All present in favor.
12. Meeting open for public discussion.
 Ron Agostinoni spoke about an award students won in a Trivial Pursuit competition at HVCC. Mr. Horan talked about a plaque received for Mark Bubniak’s planning and participation in “Coaches vs. Cancer”, over \$5,000 was collected; he also talked about students and community members that would be participating in a “St. Baldrick’s” event. The goal was to raise \$6,000, but as of that afternoon, \$18,000 had been donated. The board asked Mr. Horan to write a letter confirming the discussions at meeting with the State Education Department. Mary Yurista expressed concern about too much online or computer teaching and not enough interaction and team effort. Pam Timmons spoke about the resources out there that she utilizes for home schooling and expressed that there is a tremendous amount of information out there to be used.
13. Action items. Create a “wish list”, Draft 3 of the Budget; what would it look like if we used and additional \$100,000 from the fund balance and use it for what would impact positions that would impact the greatest number of kids and help kids with the greatest needs; 3 year budget projection.
14. Adjournment. Having no further business before the board. George Warner moved to adjourn at 11:18 pm. Michael Charsky seconded. All present in favor.